French in the Malagasy Context

FREN 3000-3500 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Madagascar: Urbanization and Rural Development

Course Description
This course aims to introduce students to the rich Malagasy cultural and literary production in French. Through the study of post-colonial texts, students learn about the post-colonial politics of Malagachization, bilingualism and the role of French language in the integration of Malagasy society into the international Francophone community. The course also focuses on enhancing student’s oral skills to facilitate their immersion into everyday life where French remains largely dominant. To achieve these broad objectives, this course encompasses two interrelated units aimed at strengthening student’s capacity and skill in reading, composition and spoken French so as to further enhance their ability to engage effectively and critically with Madagascar's rich post-colonial francophone artistic expressions. Such expressions include local and national literary production, popular or traditional music, film, oral poetry, proverbs or other dimensions of francophone oral culture. Comprehension lessons are oriented to match students’ language levels which are determined through an oral test at the beginning of each semester. For Advanced students, the goal is to take them to the Advanced High or Superior level by the end of each semester. This means that by the end of the semester, students should have gone a step further to be able to communicate in French with accuracy and fluency and should be able to participate fully and effectively in conversations on a variety of topics in formal or informal settings from both concrete and abstract perspectives. Various methods will be used to assess student performance including: oral interviews, written tests, quizzes, class participation, and oral presentations. Coursework is reinforced though daily interactions with the homestay and in the field, and part of each student’s assessment will be the level of French use outside the classroom.

Course Objectives
French in the Malagasy Context has an interdisciplinary and critical focus encompassing 45 academic hours (3 credits). Its main objectives:
- To expose students to Madagascar’s francophone artistic and cultural productions;

*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.*

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To provide comprehensive and critical understanding of francophone cultural expressions from Madagascar, including their broader role in a social and national context;
To provide understanding to the way in which French functions in the Malagasy context;
To increase student’s proficiency in spoken and written French;
To give students the capacity to use French more confidently in social settings; and
To foster French language learning outside the classroom.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students should have attained the ability to:
- Achieve increased proficiency in French by two sublevels – i.e., if entry level is determined at “advanced low”, students successfully completing the course should achieve “advanced high”;
- Identify a cross-section of Malagasy francophone artistic expressions, and to explain their particular significance in the local or national context;
- Demonstrate understanding of the historical role and function of French in local and national contexts; and
- Express understanding of important issues, events and topics embedded in Malagasy francophone artistic productions.

Course Requirements

Readings
You are responsible for all the required readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will help you place the classes in their context, to challenge and engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions and to deepen your knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class. They are not necessarily tailor-made for each and every class. Song texts and other literary sources will be selected and assigned during the course of the semester.

Introductory Readings


Select Advanced Texts


Selected Advanced Films

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PLEASE NOTE: COURSE CONTENTS, LECTURERS AND READINGS MAY BE MODIFIED AS NEEDED. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OF CLASS TOPICS OR LECTURERS BE NECESSARY, STUDENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

French in the Malagasy Context
Student performance is evaluated by teachers at each class meeting. Lessons are planned and students regrouped according to learning pace and individual strengths and weaknesses. At the end of the semester, teachers will compose an evaluation for each student, taking into account both classroom performance, effort and the use of and improvement in language skills over the course of the class. Students will be evaluated on oral presentations, written assignments, and on the extent to which they make an effort to use French both inside and outside the classroom. The final semester grade is determined by the academic director based on a combination of the criteria above.

Oral presentation on selected work 25%
Analytical paper 25%
Quizzes and oral exams 30%
Participation 20%

Grading Scale: The grading scale for all classes is as follows:
94-100% A
90-93% A-
87-89% B+
84-86% B
80-83% B-
77-79% C+
74-76% C
70-73% C-
67-69% D+
64-66% D
below 64 F

Grading Criteria
Students will receive grades on oral presentations and written work, as well as on the extent to which students make an effort to use the language outside the classroom. The final semester grade is determined by the academic director based on a combination of the above criteria.

Program Calendar

Module 1 – Oral Comprehension, Reading and Writing
This unit is designed to improve student’s French speaking, comprehension, reading, and writing skills by focusing on general pronunciation, advanced level grammar, advanced vocabulary acquisition, sentence structure and specific local nuances of French as is spoken and written in Madagascar. In order to reinforce language acquisition and its use in Madagascar, students participate in field exercises and other activities requiring the use French.

Module 2 – French in the Malagasy Context

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Drawing on the study of Francophone texts in multiple and diverse artistic and culturally significant mediums – literature, film, music, local or “grassroots” publications and oral art forms, for example – students interact with and examine Francophone expression rooted in Madagascar. Through working with such artistic expressions, students build capacity and increased proficiency in spoken and written French to facilitate the ability to perform most linguistic tasks with ease, confidence and competence. This includes competent handling of discussions abstractly, using precise vocabulary with proper intonation and the ability to demonstrate fluency to native speakers. By engaging this coursework, students additionally and importantly build knowledge and increased familiarity with Madagascar’s Francophone verbal and written arts.

**Student Expectations**

**Class Participation**
Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all language lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.